

VZCZCXRO0333
PP RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0992/01 1880618
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 060618Z JUL 08
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1231
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0262
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000992

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SPG, S/CRS, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/C, NSC FOR
BPITTMAN AND CHUDSON
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KPKO](#) [SOCI](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#) [CD](#)
SUBJECT: DARFUR SECURITY UPDATE

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. Tensions are mounting throughout Darfur, particularly in North Darfur, where a heightened Government of Sudan (GoS) military presence and tightening GoS restrictions on movement of all parties seem to signal a reassertion of GoS control over the state, possibly in response to rebel machinations on the ground. END SUMMARY.

GOS MILITARY EVERYWHERE

¶2. (SBU) In the late afternoon on June 27, four Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) tanks and at least one brand-new SAF armored personnel carrier rolled down Main Street El Fasher, knocking over road barriers and leaving spectators speechless along the way. One tank and the APC parked next to the SAF Western Command camp near the Wali's (Governor's) office, while two other tanks parked directly in the central market area. This display came on the heels of an increased visible presence of armed SAF and GoS police in technicals around town and an increased number of overflights by helicopter gunships. In the evening of June 28, FieldOffs heard exchanges of artillery fire from the west of El Fasher (in the direction of Abu Shouk IDP camp and a SAF military base).

¶3. (SBU) In all of these instances, local officials came off as cagey at best when addressing them. One National Intelligence Security Services officer laughed that "everything happens on a Friday" when asked about the presence of the tanks in El Fasher. He claimed that they were just simply a show of force (although he stopped short of saying a show of force against what threat, when pushed by FieldOff). The same NISS officer feigned ignorance of the artillery fire incident, leaving the room to go consult with other officers and even making a call to Military Intelligence in front of FieldOffs to find out more information, but later still provided no explanation.

¶4. (SBU) Local explanations for these displays vary. Most El Fasher residents suspect that the June 27 tank parade was in response to rumors of another janjaweed uprising due to unpaid salaries. Rebels claim that the GoS was concerned by reports that Minni Minawi had been moving at roughly the same time from Chad through North Darfur to Dar Al Salaam, south of El Fasher, and that Minni was doing so with Justice and Equality Movement escort [NOTE: One JEM contact bragged that it was common knowledge that every time a SAF gunship overflew El Fasher, it was in direct response to reports that JEM were in the region. END NOTE]. Cell phone networks for the past week have been down, save for local calls, usually a harbinger of some type of security incident.

UNAMID MOVEMENT RESTRICTED

¶5. (SBU) On June 29 the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) reported that members of the Sudan Liberation Army of Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) threatened UNAMID after an UNAMID APC injured a pedestrian near Zam Zam IDP camp. SLA/MM demanded \$1000 in compensation for the injury, which UNAMID did not pay, and UNAMID J3 warned at this time for the Mission to take this threat

seriously. The Mission, however, did not heed this warning. At approximately 1000 on June 30 six armed SLA/MM members stopped a 38-person UNAMID patrol in Zam Zam (consisting of at least 12 police officers, 12 military and five language assistants) and subjected it to five hours of negotiation before it was released. UNAMID J2 accused SLA/MM of acting with impunity, "like it used to during the days of AMIS." J3 added that GoS police were investigating the incident but that SLA/MM was refusing any legal process and insisting on immediate compensation.

16. (SBU) UNAMID Deputy Joint Special Representative issued a statement on July 1 condemning the incident, and media reports billed it as a hostage situation. The Deputy Force Commander (D/FC) reportedly vehemently denied this label in an UNAMID meeting on July 12. He reportedly asked his staff from where the word "hostage" had come in relation to this incident, since in his estimation and experience, there was no way a six-man group could overtake a. armed 38-urSoo0ratsoln "J: ffacEr admhtp%l'Tdat&V@MMQRUnacceptable for anyone in UNAMID to declare places "no-go zones" if they fell into UNAMID's Area of Responsibility.

17. (SBU) It is not just the armed Darfur movements that have been restricting UNAMID's movement; the GoS has been doing so as well, in apparent violation of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) it signed with UNAMID in February. According to UNAMID J2, on July 1 at approximately 1000h near Sheiria, South Darfur (northeast of

KHARTOUM 00000992 002 OF 002

Nyala), a UNAMID confidence-building patrol, which had been dispatched to verify intertribal fighting in the area, met with violent resistance at a checkpoint from the SAF, which apparently did not want the team poking around the area. J2 confirmed that the SAF fired warning shots at the UNAMID patrol. There were also reportedly Arab militias in the area. The D/FC is still trying to confirm with Sector South what happened, and the CFC said it would investigate.

18. (SBU) In another apparent SOFA violation in South Darfur, the SAF reportedly denied a UNAMID patrol access to the villages of Um Dofoto and Gandhi (50km west of Nyala, South Darfur), all inhabited by the Arab Tarjem tribe, which has been involved in violent clashes with the Benihalba Arab tribe over the past week. These two villages, as well as a third called Bulbul Dala Angara, were attacked on June 27 by the Benihalba in retaliation for a June 26 attack by the Tarjem on the Benihalba village of Hireiz, an attack which killed four farmers. In the June 27 retaliation, 60 Tarjem tribespeople were reportedly killed and seven Benihalba injured. On June 29 the Commissioner of Nomad Regulation Committee was killed in the crossfire of Benihalba-Tarjem fighting in Dandura. Fighting in Gandhi (where UNAMID was denied access) continued July 1 with heavy casualties reported by both sides. There are reports of movement of the Tarjem from Dandura and Gandhi to Abu Zazur and Edd al Fursan as a result of the fighting, and the GoS declared the region a "military operation area," dispatching police and army forces on July 1. There are reports of clashes between the GoS and the Benihalba militia, which resulted in casualties on both sides and which no doubt led to the SAF's continued resistance to UNAMID patrols in the region. Benihalba have reportedly threatened to kill the Governor of South Darfur state, causing him to flee temporarily to Khartoum.

MOVEMENT RESTRICTIONS FOR EVERYONE ELSE

19. (SBU) Following the June 30 crash of an IL-76 near Khartoum and the subsequent sacking of the Civil Aviation Authority Chief, all IL-76 and Antonov planes were grounded in Sudan, dealing a major blow to PAE in Darfur, the majority of whose air fleet is comprised of these types of Russian-made planes, now reportedly leased by Ukrainian companies. Commercial flights from Khartoum to El Fasher were closed to non-Sudanese passengers on July 4, with authorities demanding paperwork from passengers which only two days before it had not. This ban presents a major operational challenge to PAE, which needs to fly its aircraft to bring in equipment for UNAMID construction. The ban also presents a major challenge to all residents living and working in Darfur who need to return to Khartoum and vice versa. As of July 4, UNAMID and UN agencies are

still flying their aircraft, although for how long remains anyone's guess. Sudanese Military Intelligence (DMI) also refused to allow a USAID chartered flight, which included CDA Fernandez, to go to Darfur on June 29, despite the flight and its passengers having secured permission from the Foreign Ministry and NISS (DMI may have feared Charge was going to meet in the field with Minnawi and his troops).

COMMENT

¶10. (SBU) The two trends to watch closely in the coming weeks are the apparent SOFA violations, as UNAMID must speak out and demand to have free access across Darfur, and more importantly the apparent coordination that may be occurring between JEM and SLM/MM. If this extends to SLA/U as well, even a loose Zaghawa security alliance would pose a very serious threat to the regime, and would likely be met with a strong reaction. Violence among Arab tribes also bears watching as they turn on each other and, increasingly, on authorities sent from Khartoum.

FERNANDEZ